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ABSTRACT

Vocational-technical education can alter the situation of manpower shortages, unemployable youth, increasing numbers of welfare recipients, and increasing number of dropouts. There has been legislative response to the nation's commitment to vocational-technical education. The financial returns of the career-oriented education are impressive in that it more than pays for itself, yet an inequity persists in the distribution of education dollars between college allocations and allocations to vocational education. The image of vocational education needs to be improved while career education is stressed. There are five levels of curriculum organization which can be effective in conveying the career education concept: K-6, 7-9, 10-14, post-secondary, and adult and continuing education. To make career education a reality, it is necessary to consider all education as both academic and vocational, also cooperative programs must be improved, work experience must be available, job placement must be stressed, and programs must be updated. With better trained teachers and effective guidance and counseling, the challenge can be met. (AG)

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CAREER EDUCATION -- LEGISLATORS' CONCERN

SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

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Never in the history of America have we had more interest in vocational and technical education at all levels of government, of industry, of business, of labor, and on the part of the so-called "just plain private citizens." In at least 10 States, governors recently have called conferences of citizens to discuss this important field. Mayors of major cities, school superintendents, teachers' organizations, and the members of Boards of Education have begun to talk about vocational education and how it can change the whole pattern of education.

The July, 1971 issue of Compact magazine, published by the Education Commission of the States, quotes New Jersey's Governor Cahill in a speech before his Governor's Conference on Vocational Education. Governor Cahill said that he sees four warning signals which enable you to gauge whether your educational system is functioning adequately. The first warning indicator is the existence of critical manpower shortages in vital areas. He pointed out that although unemployment exists in certain occupations, in many critical areas we have manpower shortages.

A second indicator is the high number of unemployable youth who leave our high schools. Governor Cahill said: "I have been deeply disturbed by the number of business and industry leaders in New Jersey who have told me that many of our high school graduates cannot be hired because they have no salable skills, and, in many instances, lack the basic education and reading ability necessary even to hold semi-skilled or unskilled jobs."

A third indicator of problems in our system of education is the failure to halt the staggering increase in the number of welfare recipients. By failing to reduce the flow of youth into the pool of unemployed, Governor

Cahill emphasized, we continue to add to the soaring welfare roles.

A fourth major indicator is the increasing number of youth who are trapped in the cycle of despair which begins with dropping out of school and ends in juvenile deliquency, crime, and recidivism. In many areas of our country, one out of every five teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 is out of school and out of work.

We are living in an era of such rapid change that it is very difficult, obviously, for the educational system to change as rapidly as it should; nevertheless, change it must. I would recommend to every legislator and every person who influences change in government and education Alvin Toffler's book, Future Shock. Toffler defines future shock as the shattering stress and disorientation that individuals are subjected to by too much change too fast. He notes that only during the last four lifetimes of man's existence has it been possible to measure time with any accuracy, and only in the last two lifetimes has anyone anywhere used an electric motor. The overwhelming majority of all material goods we use in our daily life today have been developed within the present lifetime of most people living today. When we look at the drop-out statistics across the country, we find that we still have an average of 800,000 drop-outs every year from our nation's schools. Why do young people drop out? In most studies, youngsters give two reasons. The first is lack of interest in school, and the second reason is to get a job. They little realize that there aren't any jobs for the unskilled and undereducated today, they are just going to be added to hundreds and

thousands of others idle on our street corners. I believe that vocational-technical education, if it can permeate the entire school system of this country, can change this.

Let us briefly review this nation's commitment legislatively to vocational-technical education. In 1967 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act. This was the nation's first commitment to a national policy to train people for employment. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 was in a sense superseded by the Vocational Education Act in 1963. One of the problems of the Smith-Hughes Act was that it tended to be a rigid structure, with an appropriation of only 7.2 million dollars for the entire country. The Act did, however, commit our nation to the idea of vocational education. Then in 1964, based on a presidential panel study, the 1963 Vocational Education Act was funded. This gave the States a much greater amount of federal money to expand and improve vocational education and more freedom to determine how that money should be used to meet their problems.

Although the 1963 Act completely changed the Smith-Hughes law, the 1963 Act itself was completely changed by the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments. So we have had two major changes in legislation in just the past six or seven years. But what was the cause of this, and why? During th 50 years preceding these legislative acts, the mass exodus from the farms had begun. Subsequently, there has been a mass influx of women into the labor force. In addition, there has been a far-reaching transformation in the content of work. White collar workers now outnumber the blue collar workers. This nation has become the first nation of the world to become a predominantly service-oriented nation.

Fifty years ago, three out of every ten workers were employed in agriculture. By 1947, it was one in seven; today it is one in 20. Since 1940 there has been a net transfer of 25 million people from farm to urban areas. Today, farm-reared people make up approximately one-third of the adult populations in our metropolitian centers. The former Secretary of Agriculture from Minnesota, Orville Freeman, said recently, "One of the causes of the problems we have in our urban centers is the lack of adequate vocational-technical education training programsin the rural areas where so many of our citizens migrate." He urged a great increase in vocational-technical education in the rural areas of our country. South Carolina has brought industry into its State by making available a network of vocational and technical training centers free of charge. These centers train workers for the new plants for whatever occupations are needed. This could be done by every State.

Vocational education in American has made great strides since the implementation of the Vocational Act of 1963 and the 1968 Amendments because the States have had more money with which to establish and maintain good vocational education. Let me share with you some impressive statistics on the status of vocational education nationwide. In fiscal year 1970, the last year in which records are available, there were 8.7 million people enrolled in federally subsidized vocational education in this country. About 66 percent of the enrollments were in specialized and comprehensive high schools, and about 16.8 percent were in community colleges and post-secondary institutes. About 20 percent of youth in secondary education were enrolled in vocational education. Most of our studies say that from 50-60 percent of youth should be enrolled in vocational education at the secondary level. Obviously, we

are not reaching the target. In 1970, there were about 1 million disadvantaged and handicapped persons enrolled in vocational education. This is a completely new emphasis that we have in vocational education now, under the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. The Federal government invested over 360 million dollars in 1970 which represents an increase from $25 per student to $34 per student, nationally. In 1970, we had vocational education programs funded federally and matched with State and local monies. The States and local education agencies overmatched federal funds by more than $4 to every federal dollar.

Good vocational education of less than a baccalaureate degree is offered across the country in a variety of institutions: comprehensive high schools, area vocational-technical centers, technical institutes, community colleges, and even in four-year colleges.

According to projections, in 1975 only 24 percent of the needs of the labor market will be met by our vocational-technical education system. Obviously we need to expand the program to meet the vocational education needs of our country.

You may ask yourself, "What does it cost?" Let me emphasize that vocational education in the long run does not cost - it pays!! This might even be an appropriate motto for those who would support vocational education. Let's look at what vocational education does for people economically. According to follow-up reports from State agencies and by the U.S. Office of Education, the average unemployment rate among vocational education graduates, between the ages of 18 and 24, is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate is more than four times as high among those youth 18 to 24 who did not have vocational education.

The President's National Advisory Council on Vocational Education has published five short, concise reports in which it calls to the attention of the President of the United States, the Congress, and the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare the great need for expanded and improved vocational education. If you have not seen these reports, I would certainly recommend to you that you read them. They are double-spaced--none are more than 12 pages long--and each emphasizes in positive tones what needs to be done. Let me briefly share with you some of the recommendations of the President's Council. "The Advisory Council recognized that the short term costs of really modernizing vocational education are quite high, but the long-range dividends are also quite high. In vocational-technical education, the classes are usually smaller than in academic education, the equipment is expensive, and job placement is expensive. When cost and dividends are evaluated on a broader scale, it is a different story. Educating young people for employment through vocational education costs, in the long run, far less than educating them with college programs. Most of them will never enter college anyway, and most of those who do will not finish."

It is ironic to note that the Federal Government spends $14 for college education for every dollar it spends for vocational education. In addition, the Federal government spends $4 in remedial programs to reclaim the school's failures for every dollar it spends on preventive vocational education. We've got to turn around this spending ratio. We must spend our dollars to prevent young people from leaving school without skills and adding to the pool of unemployables. We must do this at the Federal level and at the State level, as well. Let's put the emphasis on <u>preventive</u> programs so we don't have to spend so much on the more costly <u>remedial</u> types of programs, such as MDTA and OEO types of programs.

The National Advisory Council has also pointed out that we have in this country an unfortunate attitude toward vocational education. More than 10,000 randomly selected citizens polled by a New Jersey public opinion research firm supported the idea of vocational education--but for somebody else's children. Most said: "My children are going to college." In commenting on these findings, the National Advisory Council said in its first report: "At the very heart of the problem is a national attitude that says vocational education is designed for somebody's else's children. This attitude is shared by businessmen, labor leaders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. We are all guilty. We have promoted the idea that the only good education is an education capped by four years of college. This idea is transmitted by our values, our aspirations, and our silent support is snobbish, undemocratic, and a revelation why schools fail so many people."

Dr. Sidney P. Marland, U.S. Commissioner of Education, has served in school administration in small communities, suburbia; and in Pittsburgh. Dr. Marland has come out strongly in favor of career education. He sees the need for a renewed emphasis on career education. He feels that career education can and should assume every young person should be assured that, as part of his education, he will acquire the aptitudes and skills to go on to post-secondary education or get a job.

In a major address to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Dr. Marland said that we must get rid of the general curriculum which leads nowhere. The general curriculum is no better than a holding action. The students are neither prepared for college nor are they being given any salable skills.

I've talked mostly about secondary education, but we should not overlook the important post-secondary aspect of adult and continuing education. We know from statistics of the U.S. Labor Department the average worker today will

change jobs anywhere from one to seven times, and some would say eight or more times, during his working career. Recently, the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Problems had this to say about continuing education: "Nothing short of continuing education throughout the entire life span is sufficient to provide individual fulfillment and mastery of the environment. There is no such thing as terminal education. Life long learning is universal; it is necessary now that we are living in a learning society."

Let me briefly share with you the national priorities I see for vocational education. In addition, let me share with you the total program of career education as Secretary Richardson of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and Commissioner Marland, have been presenting it. Career education begins in the very early grades, continues through the middle and junior high school, and is carried all the way through the adult working life of individuals.

I see five fairly distinct levels in the curriculum organization of the career education concept.

Level 1, starts in the elementary grades, where we have 30 million students. Every child explores the world of work and the man-made environment. Each student has an opportunity to develop a respect for working with his hands. The opportunity for youngsters to understand and appreciate the concept of work is being developed, something that is neglected in our elementary schools today.

Level 2 is an occupational information program for all children. In the middle school, say ranging from sixth grade to possible the tenth, all children have an opportunity to explore the world of work and occupations. Terry Sanford of North Carolina was one of the pioneer governors of this nation to get legislation through to change the vocational guidance systems in the schools.

Legislation in the amount of three million dollars was introduced and passed during his first month of office in 1961 to develop a program called "Introduction to Vocations." New Jersey heard about the idea, ~~copied~~ ADAPTED IT TO THE NEEDS AND ESTABLISHED it. New Jersey worked closely with North Carolina in developing this program which attempts to reach all children at the middle and junior high school level. The children go through a series of experiences teaching them about the world of work and learning what jobs are about so that when they get to the eleventh or twelfth grades they can make an intelligent career decision. If vocational education is available to them, they usually will know when they reach the tenth grade what they want and what they are after.

The third level in this career education program is specific occupational preparation. This is where the traditional kinds of vocational-technical education have been most successful - providing specific skill development so that young people have salable skills when they leave the school. Follow-up studies indicate that we place 75-80 percent of our young people who have gone through this specialized type of vocational educational program in our high schools.

Level 4, is also specific occupational preparation--but at the post-secondary level. This is the area that is going to grow most rapidly--post-secondary occupational education in community colleges, in area vocational schools, even in branches of secondary schools and branches of colleges and universities. There are about 75 universities in this country offering post-secondary education at less than the two-year level. So this, level 4, post-secondary, is a very important level.

At level five is the adult program that I mentioned previously. This level trains or retrains adults who need to upgrade their skills. If we can develope

If we can develop this total continuous kind of career education program starting in the early age levels and going all the way through, then we will change our education system from what it is today-basically a college preparatory program. Statistics indicate that at the turn of the century only 20 percent of the jobs will require a four-year Baccalaureate Degree. Nationally, about 40 percent of high school graduates enter college, and nationally half of that group drop out during their freshman year because the program they found in college was not what their parents thought it would be. In short, we should be realistic and ask ourselves why should we permit counselors to spent 80-90 percent of their time trying to get young people into college?

Let me review and reiterate some statistics, and then I'll close with about three statements: $4.00 of Federal money is spent on remedial and poverty type programs for every $1 of vocational education program money and this has to be changed. Fourteen dollars of Federal money is spent on the nation's universities and colleges for each $1 of Federal money spent on vocational education, this has got to be changed. Twenty-four percent of the students of elementary and secondary schools drop out, approximately 800,000 kids per year drop out of school because the school is not meeting their needs. This has to be changed. Half of the students who start college drop out before completion - as a matter of fact, half of them drop out of college in their freshman year. This has to be changed.

If we are going to make career education a reality, there are about five or six things we need to do. We need to eliminate the separateness we have in many of our schools between vocational and academic education. We need to get across the idea that all education is both academic and vocational.

We have to develop more cooperation between the schools, organized labor, and business and industry. We should have more students out on work-experience

programs. We should do a better job of placing graduates. We should do a better job of keeping our vocational programs current and in line with the needs of business and industry. We've got to move vocational education, or whatever you wish to call it, into the elementary classroom. We need to improve our guidance and counseling with more emphasis on programs for the youngsters who are handicapped and disadvantaged. We've got to find a way to train more teachers and personnel who are competent and who know how to teach good vocational education. To help meet this challenge successfully, I suggest you take a look at "New Directions for Career Education." It is a collection of papers written by national leaders in vocational education. I should like to conclude with a quotation from this book, which was edited by the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Education, Roman C. Pucinski of Illinois.

Mr. Pucinski says: "Now that recent legislative history has firmly established the principle of strong federal support for education, the next step must be for consolidation of many of these provisions based on the central thrust of universal, lifetime, comprehensive career education for all Americans from the early years until retirement." This is the kind of career education program that we need to have in America, one that includes traditional vocational-technical education plus a complete change in American education centered around career development.